

**Subcommittee on Antiquities and Monuments
(Declaration of Proposed Monument)(Hung Lau) Notice**

Response to motion passed at the meeting of 10 April 2017

Grading system for historic buildings

The Antiquities Advisory Board (“AAB”) is a statutory body established under section 17 of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (the “Ordinance”). One of the responsibilities of AAB is to assess the heritage value of historic buildings. Under the prevailing grading system, AAB, having regard to the assessments of the heritage value of individual historic buildings by the independent Historic Buildings Assessment Panel and views and additional information received from members of the public and the owners of the buildings concerned during public consultation, accords Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 status (or nil grade) to individual historic buildings. The grading system is administrative in nature which provides an objective basis for determining the heritage value, and hence the preservation need, of historic buildings in Hong Kong. In addition, AAB agreed in 2008 that the list of Grade 1 historic buildings would be regarded as a pool of highly valuable heritage buildings for consideration by the Antiquities Authority (“AA”) as to whether some of these might have reached the “high threshold” of monuments to be put under statutory protection.

2. Since 2005, the following six criteria have been used to assess the heritage value of historic buildings: historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, authenticity, and rarity. The cultural setting and associated cultural landscape of a building are considered under the assessment criterion of “authenticity”, while the symbolic importance of a building recognised by the community and consideration on cultural identity are taken into account under the assessment criterion of “social value and local interest”. In other words, in assessing the heritage value of a historic building, not only the tangible architectural value of the building is evaluated, but factors relating to the cultural landscape and social value associated with a building are also

assessed. In addition, as mentioned above, the purpose of the grading system is to determine the heritage value (文物價值) of historic buildings in Hong Kong (which is the same as “古蹟價值” referred to in the motion).

3. The independent Historic Buildings Assessment Panel has been formed since March 2005 to undertake in-depth evaluation of the heritage value of historic buildings under the grading assessment. The Panel comprises historians as well as members of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, the Hong Kong Institute of Planners and the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers. As such, in terms of the purpose and design, the Panel is on par with the independent expert study suggested in the motion.

Heritage value of Hung Lau

4. As pointed out in our response to Members’ request for information made at the meeting of 31 March 2017 (LC Paper No. CB(1)778/16-17(02)), AAB had discussed the heritage value of Hung Lau since 1981 and subsequently conducted several reviews. AAB retained the grading of Hung Lau as Grade 1 and did not recommend declaring it as monument albeit the formalisation of the assessment criteria and the introduction of the independent Historic Buildings Assessment Panel in 2005.

5. In the light of latest development, AA declared Hung Lau as proposed monument under section 2A(1) of the Ordinance on 13 March 2017 with an effective period of 12 months. During this period, follow-up actions in relation to the heritage value of Hung Lau include:

- (1) conducting in-depth study on the heritage value of Hung Lau. Besides reviewing materials examined in previous grading exercises, we will scrutinise materials submitted by community groups, and look for new information on Hung Lau (if any) from various sources with a view to refining the assessment on Hung Lau’s heritage value;

- (2) it has been AAB's practice to invite the independent Historic Buildings Assessment Panel to review assessment results of previous exercises upon receipt of new information. We will submit the latest appraisal report on Hung Lau to AAB as per the prevailing practice; and
- (3) in accordance with section 3(1) of the Ordinance, we will consult AAB on whether Hung Lau should be declared as monument.

6. The declaration of Hung Lau as proposed monument may not imply that it will eventually be declared as monument, which will depend on (re)consideration of all relevant factors (including the results of the follow-up actions in paragraph 5 above as well as the AAB's discussions and views). Should AA declare a building as monument by notice in the Gazette, the notice, which is a subsidiary legislation, will be subject to negative vetting by the Legislative Council.

Development Bureau
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